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RUEHJA/ISLAMIC CONFERENCE COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1489
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1058
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1969
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 003070

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, NEA, NEA/IPA
NSC FOR E.PHU

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: POLITICAL ISLAM -- MAINSTREAM MUSLIMS CONDEMN
"CALIPHATE" IDEA

REF: A. JAKARTA 03065

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 02202

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4(b,d).

[1](#)1. (U) This message was coordinated with Consulate Surabaya.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: An influential chapter of the group Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) has issued a statement condemning the idea that Muslims must work to create an Islamic "Caliphate." A contact told Pol/C that NU as a whole was moving toward issuing a similar statement. A contact at Muhammadiyah--another leading mainstream Muslim organization--said his group had seen the NU statement, but had no plans to issue anything similar at this time. The NU statement will resonate and is a further sign of the mainstream effort to marginalize radicals. END SUMMARY.

CALIPHATE STRIKES OUT

[1](#)3. (SBU) The notion of an Islamic "Caliphate," popular among some Indonesian radicals, has taken a hit. A committee of the East Java Chapter of NU issued a statement on November 4 condemning the idea that Muslims must work to create such a Caliphate. (Note: NU has an estimated 40 million members; its East Java chapter is particularly influential within the group.) According to contacts, the committee had been tasked to review the whole notion because of a small group of radicals affiliated with the Caliphate-supporting Hizbut Tahrir-Indonesia (HTI) party which has been trying to draw support from NU. (Note: HTI--which claims to be non-violent--is part of an international movement with affiliates in the UK and Jordan, for example.)

[1](#)4. (U) The committee held that--after much research--it could not find any "support in the Koran or the Hadith" ("Hadith" -- traditions associated with Prophet Mohammad) for the idea that Muslims must back a Caliphate. The statement went on to back the unity and integrity of the "united state of Indonesia" and to attack the "transnational ideologies" that mandated the imposition of a Caliphate.

NU IN JAKARTA -- WE'RE ON BOARD

[1](#)5. (C) NU's main office--which is located in Jakarta--is on board. In a November 5 conversation with Pol/C, Md. Fajrul

Falaakh, a high-level NU official and academic, commented that NU and its Chair, Hasyim Muzadi, supported the East Java Chapter's action. In fact, NU as a whole was moving toward the issuance of a similar statement in the near future. Falaakh said the East Java Chapter's statement was "not a shift in position by NU, but part of long-held NU doctrine." He added, however, that it was important to reiterate "at this time" concerns over the Caliphate idea, given that HTI was trying hard to push the idea as part of "legitimate Islam backed by religious sources." NU, he continued, had an obligation to clear up such "errors." Falaakh added that the terrorist group, Jemmah Islamiyah, also supported the notion of creating a "Caliphate" in Southeast Asia.

MUHAMMADIYAH -- NOT THERE YET

¶6. (C) Indonesia's other key mainstream Muslim organization does not seem likely to get in on the act right away. Subibyo Markus, a high-level official with Muhammadiyah (an organization with about 35 million members), told Pol/C that his organization had seen the NU statement, but had no plans to issue anything similar at this time. Markus maintained that the group had "nothing against" the NU East Java Chapter's statement--"in fact, we basically agree with it." He added, however, that Muhammadiyah "just did not see the need to issue a statement given that "very few people support the Caliphate idea." Pol/C noted that the USG had no interest in getting involved in theology, but--given that many extremists supported the Caliphate idea--it seemed appropriate to take them head-on and underscore support for a sovereign state that guarantees religious freedom.

OBJECTIVE -- MARGINALIZE RADICALS

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¶7. (C) The East Java Chapter's statement will resonate in Islamic circles--NU is an organization with widespread roots in Indonesia. As reviewed in Ref A, both NU and Muhammadiyah are making a concerted effort to marginalize radicals. Unfortunately, Muhammadiyah--which some observers say has more to fear from radical ideologies due to its "modernist" philosophy--seems disinclined to issue its own statement at this time. To some extent, Muhammadiyah seems to be trying some kind of "constructive engagement" strategy with radicals; its leader, Din Syamasuddin, even went so far as to attend an HTI rally in August, for example (ref B). That said, the general direction of mainstream groups at this point is to take a stand, and to confront radicalism and terrorist ideologies.

HUME